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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***Transportation Appropriations Cut Millions for Oklahoma Roads
Carson Calls Funding Level “Damaging” and “Irresponsible”***

Washington, D.C. --

Second District Congressman Brad Carson (D-OK) responded to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure’s approval of the Fiscal Years 2003 Transportation Appropriation Bill. Under the approved legislation, Oklahoma stands to lose \$59 million for highways and road infrastructure that will result in a loss of 2,300 jobs.

“I am very troubled by the funding level approved by the Appropriations Subcommittee,” Congressman Carson said. “The proposed \$59 million cut will be very damaging to Oklahoma. The condition of the roads in our state is notoriously bad. It is not uncommon for me to hear my constituents ask ‘where are our tax dollars going’ when it comes to our roads and infrastructure. The answer is, our tax dollars are being used to fund road projects in other states.

“Oklahoma is the only state west of the Mississippi River to lose a Congressional seat in the last decade. We must be aggressive in economic development, and improving our infrastructure should be one our state’s top priority. Our road system is riddled with potholes and concrete barriers. Traffic congestion in Tulsa has become a nightmare for many commuters, and this is not the time for additional cuts in our infrastructure funding. This cut could also mean that road repairs and upgrades already underway could be terminated.

“Across Oklahoma, there are hundreds of bridges that are in critical condition. Federal funding is necessary to help alleviate the cost burden to our state’s budget. We are putting people’s lives in danger.

“Traveling south on Highway 69 or on the Indian Nation Turnpike to Texas is eye-opening. As soon as you cross the Red River, the roads are newly paved and there is not a pothole in sight. The contrast in the road conditions is truly as different as night and day. For every tax dollar sent to Washington for infrastructure and road improvements, Oklahoma receives eighty-nine cents in return. This funding cut approved by the

Subcommittee will only continue to leave Oklahoma taxpayers paying for roads in Texas. This budget cut is irresponsible, and I will work with members to restore funding to this legislation when it is brought to a final vote by the House.”

Members on the Appropriations Subcommittee attempted to overturn the budget cut to Oklahoma and other states, however, this attempt failed by two votes. Congressman Carson is a member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. The Congressman has made increased funding for Oklahoma roads one of his top priorities.

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